

---

I wish to support in principle, Senator Fielding's Responsible Takeaway Hours Bill.  
In Newcastle we have had more than our fill of loutish drunken behaviour, aggravated by the sale of bottled liquor.

However the Bill does not go far enough. Sales of a harmful substance such as alcohol should be tightly restricted, and be available only to those holding a licence to purchase it, whether the purchase be at a hotel, restaurant or bottle shop. Licences would be granted only to those who pass a written test, but not to anyone under 25 (the age at which the brain is more protected against this toxin), or those with sexually-transmitted diseases, or those convicted of violence or vandalism. Licences should be suspended during pregnancy to avoid damage to the fetus.

The call for restrictions does not arise from a kill-joy attitude, but, on the contrary, from the desire for a much happier society. It is not only desirable, but also possible, for individuals and communities to find a much greater purpose for their lives, and pleasure that does not come out of a bottle.

It is even known for people who had been in the liquor trade, to realise the misery they were causing, and turn to a more socially beneficial business.

This realisation must be fostered in all sectors of the community. I quote from a speech recently delivered in the NSW Parliament:

"Whilst many non-indigenous Australians work hard to promote reconciliation, it must be noted that many Aboriginal leaders also labour very hard to promote genuine reconciliation. Some of them have good reason to have hatred in their hearts and to carry a grudge because of the way they or their ancestors have been treated. The people I know, who are Christians, have forgiven the Europeans for the way they treated the Aboriginal people. They have reached out their hand in a genuine act of friendship and reconciliation. It is important to acknowledge that it is a two-way action.

"A group of Aboriginal people with whom I have been associated since 1983 belongs to the Muli Muli Aboriginal community, which is an Aboriginal village north of Kyogle near the Queensland border. Hundreds of Aboriginal people live in this village. Over the years, with State and Federal assistance, they have replaced old, ramshackle buildings with modern, design-built, brick houses. I have stayed in some of these houses. They are well built and of high quality and meet the needs of the Aboriginal people. I am pleased that they have been able to secure this type of accommodation. A unique aspect of this village is that it is a Christian village. I do not claim that everyone in the community is a dedicated Christian, but I understand that the majority are. This fact is reflected in the atmosphere of the village and the way in which the people care for it. There are no wrecked cars or rubbish lying around and the grounds are well maintained. At the back of the village is a well cared for cemetery, where some of the older people are buried.

**"Beyond the cemetery are two or three large piles of beer cans. The beer cans have been left as a memorial to past activities. At one stage the community had serious problems with alcohol consumption, which led to violence, the destruction of homes and the burning down of the community centre. But because of their Christian faith and through God's grace, the whole community has changed. The people keep the beer cans to remind them of the bad times. Now no alcohol is allowed in the community. It is a dry community, and I believe that is one of the reasons for its success. The community also discourages cigarette smoking."** (Hon. Rev. Fred Nile)

If the Senate Committee members examining this Bill have any hope for a peaceful and prosperous Australia, they will not only restrict trading hours for bottle shops, thus dramatically reducing the violence, vandalism and vice on our streets, they will emulate this Aboriginal community, and promote non-alcoholic ways to forge friendship and community spirit.

Yours sincerely,  
Dr B. Christina Naylor,